

Washington State Department of Health Injury and Violence Prevention Program

The Washington State Department of Health Injury & Violence & Prevention (IVP) Program uses data to identify statewide prevention priorities. IVP staff promote community interventions based on the best available evidence. Our goal is to eliminate preventable trauma, death, and disability due to injury and violence.

Preventing injuries and violence in Washington

For over 26 years, the IVP program has provided leadership and technical expertise in the prevention of injury and violence. We do this by:

- Strengthening policies, programs, community norms and systems that lead to the prevention of injury and violence.
- Investing resources in local prevention
- Supporting statewide coalitions and advisory committees
- Collecting, analyzing and interpreting data
- Evaluating prevention programs, interventions, and policies
- Developing and delivering training and technical assistance to local, regional, and state programs and organizations
- Communicating about public health approaches to injury and violence prevention, emerging issues, and prevention practices supported by the best available evidence

IVP's mission is to provide statewide leadership in preventing trauma, death and disability due to injury and violence.

The language of injury and violence prevention

In public health practice, **injury** is damage or harm to the body resulting in impairment or destruction of health. **Violence** is *intentional injury*, the use of power or force against oneself or another person. The outcome of injury and violence is **trauma**: physical, emotional, or psychological effects that can have long-lasting effects on an individual and community's well-being.

Injuries and violence are preventable, and everyone in Washington has a role in prevention.

IVP promotes the **primary prevention** of injury and violence, addressing the root causes of violence and injury. Primary prevention is critical to stopping injuries and violence before they occur, rather than trying to prevent a reoccurrence, or to mitigate the effects of trauma.

Risk factors are factors that make people more likely to experience injury or violence. **Protective factors**—skills and characteristics that lessen the impact of risk—do not necessarily make risk factors go away. Instead, they may give a person the skills or support to get through difficulties with their health and wellness intact. Protective factors for injury and violence prevention range from small actions such as using seatbelts, to broader elements such as social connectedness and empathy for how one's action affect others. IVP works to reduce risk factors and reinforce protective factors in Washington's communities.

Although primary-prevention models have been funded since the 1990's, there has been little study of the effects of these interventions. Therefore, IVP uses **evidence-informed research** – the best available research – to guide its policies and programs.

Our Work

Violence Prevention

Domestic Violence. Domestic violence – or intimate partner violence – is any behavior intended to gain or maintain power and control over a spouse, partner, girlfriend, boyfriend, or intimate family member. The core strategy for preventing domestic violence is the promotion of respectful, non-violent relationships by addressing factors at the individual, relationship, community, and societal levels.

Sexual Violence. To prevent sexual violence, the IVP Program promotes the Social Ecological Model (SEM), a model of behavior change based on the theory that individuals, relationships, communities, and society all influence one another to affect sexual violence. We support work at the social and community level, changing norms and beliefs to reduce risk factors and increase protective factors, and ultimately prevent sexual assaults in Washington.

Suicide. To prevent suicide in Washington, we must change the factors we know contribute to suicide risk, such as childhood trauma, isolation in our communities, access to lethal means, and lack of access to behavioral healthcare. We work with high-risk groups and the general population to increase protective factors such as access to effective mental health care and social connectedness.



Injury Prevention

Child Injury. Injuries are the leading cause of death for children in Washington State. We support local and state initiatives, including the Washington State Safe Kids Coalition, to prevent childhood injuries at home, in school, or on the playground.

Motor Vehicle Crashes. A variety of factors lead to fatal or serious injury crashes. Addressing dangerous human error such as driving while impaired or distracted, and protecting vulnerable road users, are key ways to prevent crashes.

Older Adult Falls. A fall to an older adult can lead to serious injuries and even death. However, falls are not an inevitable part of aging. We support work at the community level and with health care systems to promote evidence-based strategies to reduce or modify risk factors. Ultimately, we want to assist older adults to remain healthy, active and independent.

Prescription Drug Overdose. Poisoning is the second-leading cause of unintentional injury-related death in Washington. To address the ongoing prescription drug overdose epidemic, we use a three-pronged approach to preventing overdose: improve the prescribing of opioids, expand treatment of addiction, and reduce access to illegal opioids.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). TBI is a head injury that affects cognitive function, motor function, sensation, and/or emotions. Primary prevention initiatives include safer play and sports, the use of proper restraints for children and adults in motor vehicles, safer living areas for older adults, and the prevention of domestic violence.

For more information:

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